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Security Council

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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 6946th meeting of the Security Council, held on 15 April 2013, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Peace and security in Africa", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council reaffirms its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. The Council recalls articles 33 and 34 of the Charter and reaffirms its commitment to the settlement of disputes by peaceful means and the promotion of necessary preventive action in response to disputes or situations, the continuation of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security.

"The Security Council recalls that the prevention of conflicts remains a primary responsibility of Member States. As such, actions undertaken within the framework of conflict prevention by United Nations entities should be designed to support and complement, as appropriate, the conflict prevention roles of national Governments.

"The Security Council notes that, consistent with its functions in relation to international peace and security, it seeks to remain engaged in all stages of the conflict cycle and in exploring ways of preventing the escalation of disputes into armed conflict or a relapse into armed conflict. The Security Council further recalls that, in accordance with articles 99 and 35 of the Charter, the Secretary General or any Member State may bring to the attention of the Council any matter which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security.

"The Security Council recognizes the importance of a comprehensive strategy comprising operational and structural measures for prevention of armed conflict and encourages the development of measures to address the root-causes of conflicts in order to ensure sustainable peace. The Council reaffirms the central role of the United Nations in this regard.

"The Security Council underlines the importance of partnership and cooperation between regional and subregional organisations in accordance with Chapter VIII, in supporting conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities, as well as forging greater regional and national ownership.

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"The Security Council recalls that early warning and response systems, preventive diplomacy, preventive deployment, mediation, practical disarmament measures, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding strategies are interdependent and complementary components of a comprehensive conflict prevention strategy. The Council notes the importance of creating and maintaining peace through inclusive dialogue, reconciliation and reintegration. The Security Council further reiterates its support for the work of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and expresses its continued willingness to make use of the advisory, advocacy and resource mobilization roles of the PBC in peacebuilding activities.

"The Security Council stresses the necessity of addressing the root-causes and regional dimensions of conflicts, recalling the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary General on Causes of Conflicts and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa of 13 April 1998 (S/1998/318) and underlining the mutually supportive relationship between conflict prevention and sustainable development.

"The Security Council recalls its previous Presidential Statements concerning the various factors and causes that play a role in triggering, worsening or prolonging conflicts in Africa, and in particular the factors and causes that have been highlighted and addressed by the Council. The Council highlights the importance of implementation of effective security sector reform programs, strengthening of human rights and the rule of law, protection of civilian, addressing all forms of discrimination and political exclusion, including against women and children, protection of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, ensuring accountability, supporting the reintegration and rehabilitation of former soldiers and child soldiers, promotion of reconciliation and locally-driven solutions, promotion of meaningful progress in sustainable socio-economic development ,poverty eradication, support for representative electoral processes and the building of democratic institutions inter alia and effective control of small arms. The Council recognizes the importance of strong and effective national institutions in preventing conflict in Africa, and calls upon the Secretary-General to ensure that UN efforts to support institution building promote national ownership and are taken forward on the basis of mutual commitments.

"The Security Council recognizes the important role of the good offices of the Secretary General and his special envoys, regional UN offices, such as the United Nations Office in Central Africa (UNOCA) and the United Nations Office in West Africa (UNOWA), play in conflict prevention.

"The Security Council acknowledges the efforts of the African Union to address the root causes of conflicts, including through the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance of the African Union, the African Peer Review Mechanism, the Continental Early Warning System, the AU Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy (PCRD) and similar instruments and mechanisms in addressing the root causes of conflicts in Africa. The Council stresses the valuable contribution of mediation capacities, such as the Council of Elders and the Panel of the Wise, and of regional and sub-regional organizations, to ensuring the coherence, synergy and collective effectiveness of their efforts.

"The Security Council acknowledges the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa and the Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa and their focus on protection of vulnerable populations.

"The Security Council reaffirms its commitment to uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including its commitment and respect to the principles of independence, unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States and emphasizes the need for States to comply with their obligations under international law.

"The Security Council reaffirms its strong opposition to impunity for serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law, and emphasizes in this context the responsibility of States to comply with their relevant obligations to end impunity and, to that end, to thoroughly investigate and prosecute persons responsible for war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity or other serious violations of international humanitarian law, also in the context of conflict prevention and conflict resolution. The Council underlines the importance of raising awareness of and ensuring respect of all applicable international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law, stresses the importance of the responsibility to protect as outlined in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, including the primary responsibility of Member States to protect their populations from genocide, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The Council further underlines the role of the international community in encouraging and helping States, including through capacity-building, to meet their primary responsibility. The Council looks forward to the 2013 UN Secretary-General report on the Responsibility to Protect. The Council further recalls the important role of the Secretary-General's Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and Responsibility to Protect in matters relating to the prevention and resolution of conflict.

"The Security Council emphasizes that the fight against impunity for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide is an important element of conflict prevention. The Security Council affirms that these grave crimes must not go unpunished and that their effective prosecution must be ensured by taking appropriate action and highlights in this regard the role of the international criminal justice system.

"The Security Council reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflict and in peacebuilding, and reiterates its call to increase the equal participation, representation and full involvement of women in preventive diplomacy efforts and all related decision-making processes with regard to conflict resolution and peacebuilding in line with resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009) and 1960 (2010). The Council recognizes the need for more systematic attention to implementation of women and peace and security commitments in its own work and, in that regard, welcomes the intention of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa to incorporate gender perspectives in its work.

"The Security Council reaffirms the importance of protecting children in armed conflict in building sustainable peace, and encourages initiatives by regional and sub-regional organizations and arrangements for the protection of children affected by armed conflict. The Council further encourages continued mainstreaming of child protection into their advocacy, policies and programmes, in line with resolutions 1612 (2005), 1882 (2009), 1998 (2011) and 2068 (2012).

"The Security Council commends the critical role of United Nations peacekeeping operations in the maintenance of international peace and security, preventing and containing conflicts, promoting compliance with international norms and Security Council decisions and building peace in post-conflict situations. The Security Council also commends the role of Special Political Missions in assisting in the prevention of conflict in Africa, in particular through preventative diplomacy and mediation, peacemaking and providing longer term peacebuilding support to countries in the immediate aftermath of conflict.

"The Security Council expresses its concerns at the role played by the illegal exploitation of natural resources in fuelling some past and current conflicts. In this regard, it recognizes that the United Nations can play a role in helping the States concerned, as appropriate, upon their request and with full respect for their sovereignty over natural resources and under national ownership, to prevent illegal access to those resources and to lay the basis for their legal exploitation with a view to promoting development, in particular through building the capacity of governments in post-conflict situations to manage their resources lawfully, transparently and sustainably. In this regard, the Security Council encourages the continued efforts of UN organizations, in relevant country contexts and in accordance with their mandates, and acting in close cooperation with the UN Country Team, as a way of contributing to conflict prevention in Africa. The Security Council further recognizes the importance of commodity monitoring and certification schemes, such as the Kimberley Process, and the role of voluntary initiatives aimed at improving revenue transparency, such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), in preventing conflict in Africa.

"The Security Council encourages the development of peaceful settlement of local disputes through regional and subregional arrangements, provided that their activities are not inconsistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter. The Council reiterates its support for the efforts of all relevant regional and sub-regional organizations in particular, the African Union, the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), the Economic Community of the Central African States (ECCAS) and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) in conflict prevention.

"The Security Council underlines the importance of continually engaging the UN's existing conflict-prevention mechanisms in Africa, including UN country teams, regional and sub-regional organizations as well as national governments in preventive diplomacy and addressing root causes of conflicts

as appropriate, and encourages the promotion of regional approaches to the peaceful settlement of disputes, provided that these are in accordance with the Purposes and Principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

"The Security Council encourages the Secretary-General to continue to use mediation in Africa as often as possible to help resolve conflicts peacefully, working in coordination and closely with the African Union and subregional organizations in that regard, as appropriate.

"The Security Council looks forward to the Secretary-General's annual report on the causes of conflicts and the promotion of durable peace in Africa, making recommendations on how best to address the root causes of conflicts in Africa within the United Nations system and in co-operation with regional and sub-regional organizations and other actors."